

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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FOR SISCO

FOLLOWING REPEAT REYKJAVIK 609 ACTION SECSTATE INFO NATO
COMICEDEFOR CINCLANT SECDEF BONN COPENHAGEN LONDON OSLO
STOCKHOLM 03 MAY

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE REYKJAVIK 0609

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR PFOR IC

SUBJECT: DEFENSE AFFAIRS - FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT AND
ALTHING DEBATE

1. IN THE TWENTY- EIGHT-PAGE ANNUAL STATEMENT ON FOREIGN POLICY
PRESENTED TO ALTHING, BUT NOT YET MADE PUBLIC, FOREIGN MINISTER
AGUSTSSON DEVOTES ONLY TWO PAGES TO SECURITY AFFAIRS AND THE
BASE QUESTION. FONMIN EMPHASIZES THAT NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN
WITHOUT ALTHING APPROVAL. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF
RELEVANT SECTION.

2. QUOTE ...I SHALL NOT SAY MUCH ABOUT DUTIES OF NATO WHICH
CELEBRATED 25TH ANNIVERSARY ON APRIL 4. ALLIANCE AIMS AT
SECURING DEFENSES FOR ATLANTIC AREA, AND IT IS ALSO SCENE OF
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USEFUL EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS IN FIELD OF POLITICS CONCERNING

RELATIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, REDUCTION OF ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE, AND CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE TO MENTION ONLY A FEW EXAMPLES.

IN DEFENSE AFFAIRS THE GOVERNMENT APPROVED ON MARCH 13 THE FOLLOWING TERMS OF NEGOTIATION FOR REVISION OF THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ICELAND AND THE UNITED STATES: (THEN FOLLOWS LIST OF POINTS PRESENTED AT APRIL DISCUSSIONS.)

DURING 8TH AND 9TH OF APRIL I MET IN WASHINGTON WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND PUT FORTH THESE PROPOSALS. THE AMERICANS ACCEPTED THE PROPOSALS IN ORDER TO STUDY THEM MORE CLOSELY AND THEIR ANSWER IS TO BE EXPECTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

IT IS MY OPINION THAT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE WE SHOULD TRY TO RESOLVE THIS MATTER THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE TAKING THE STEP OF TERMINATING THE 1951 DEFENSE AGREEMENT. THIS MATTER IS STILL BEING LOOKED INTO BOTH IN WASHINGTON AND HERE AT HOME.

BEFORE THE FINAL DECISION IS MADE, THE MATTER WILL COME BEFORE THE ALTHING AS HAS BEEN SAID SO MANY TIMES BEFORE.

I HAVE ALLOWED ALTHING FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO FOLLOW THIS MATTER AS IT HAS DEVELOPED AND HAVE BRIEFED THE COMMITTEE ON THE MEETINGS THAT HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.
END QUOTE.

3. TRANSLATION OF FULL FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE FORWARDED AS AIRGRAM.

4. DURING ANNUAL "KITCHEN DEBATE" IN ALTHING MAY 2, AGUSTSSON DREW HEAVILY ON PRECEDING IN DISCUSSION OF DEFENSE MATTERS. HE NOTED TWOFOLD ORIGINAL GOI POLICY (SET IN 1971) OF REMAINING IN NATO AND REVISING OR TERMINATING DEFENSE AGREEMENT BUT STATED IT WAS CLEAR DEFENSE FORCE WOULD NOT LEAVE DURING PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S TERM OF OFFICE. AGUSTSSON STRESSED THAT PROPOSALS PRESENTED USG WERE NOT AN ULTIMATUM AND THAT NO SPECIFIC TIME LIMITS HAD BEEN SET FOR U.S. REPLY. REVISION OF DEFENSE AGREEMENT WAS STILL BEING STUDIED HERE AND IN U.S., HE SAID, AND HE COULD NOT SAY WHEN U.S. ANSWERS WOULD BE RECEIVED.
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5. IN SAME DEBATE OPPOSITION INDEPENDENCE PARTY MP, MATTHIAS A. MATHIESEN, AS PRINCIPAL SPEAKER FOR IP, LISTED SEVEN-POINT POLICY ON DEFENSE MATTERS: (1) MAINTENANCE OF NECESSARY SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY, (2) RETENTION OF ABILITY TO RESIST INITIAL ATTACK, (3) SEPARATION OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AVIATION FACILITIES, (4) ALL DEFENSE FORCE PERSONNEL TO LIVE ON BASE, (5) STRENGTHENING OF COOPERATION BETWEEN ICELAND ON ONE HAND AND US, CANADA,

AND NORWAY ON OTHER, (6) PERIODIC EXAMINATION OF DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH MODIFICATIONS AS WARRANTED, AND (7) INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF ICELANDERS IN DEFENSE MATTERS INCLUDING STRENGTHENING OF COAST GUARD AND ITS ROLE IN DEFENSE AFFAIRS. HE NOTED SUCCESS OF "DEFENDED COUNTRY" PETITION AS EXPRESSING WILL OF MAJORITY, CALLED FOR INCREASED COOPERATION WITH NATO AND FOR ABOLITION OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS ON DEFENSE MATTERS.

6. PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE, THE OTHER SPEAKERS FOR PROGRESSIVES, SAID NOTHING ON DEFENSE. MAGNUS KJARTANSSON, COMMUNIST MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, STRESSED NEED TO GET RID OF DEFENSE FORCE BUT ADMITTED THIS SEEMED MORE DIFFICULT NOW THAN WHEN COALITION TOOK OFFICE. HE SAID PROPOSALS MADE IN APRIL WOULD NOT BE CHANGED WITHOUT AGREEMENT OF ALL COALITION PARTIES. GYLFI GISLASON, LEADER OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS SAID NO ONE BELIEVED ANY DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN ON DEFENSE QUESTION UNTIL AFTER NEXT ELECTIONS WERE HELD. HANNIBAL VALDIMARSSON, LEADER OF OLL, SAID THERE WAS NOT ALTHING MAJORITY TO TERMINATE AGREEMENT.

7. WITH EXCEPTION OF FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRESENTATION, DEFENSE AFFAIRS WERE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE IN DEBATE. ECONOMIC MATTERS ARE NOW ON FRONT BURNER FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S TABLING OF EMERGENCY PROPOSALS (SEPTIL). TODAY'S AGENDA IN LOWER HOUSE WILL BE DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO DISCUSSION OF THESE MEASURES. IRVING UNQUOTE RUSH

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